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LETTER DATED 4 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY

I have the honour to address you in order to request your good offices for the purpose of the circulation, as official documents of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, of the attached notes verbales 376 and 377, sent by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations to the United States Mission to the United Nations on 4 June 1997.

The above-mentioned notes verbales address the issue of the restriction of movement imposed by the host country on certain permanent missions accredited to the United Nations, including the Permanent Mission of Cuba.

Likewise, I am requesting you to include these two notes in the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee so that they may be discussed and considered by this subsidiary organ of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Bruno RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA

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ANNEX I

Note verbale (No. 377) dated 4 June 1997 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and wishes to refer to the issue of the travel limitations and restrictions imposed by the authorities of the host country upon some permanent missions accredited to the United Nations, including the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations.

This issue has been the object of successive resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, under the item related to the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, and in particular in resolution 51/163, adopted on 16 December 1996. In that resolution the General Assembly urged the host country to lift the travel limitations and restrictions imposed and still in force against some permanent missions accredited to the United Nations and against some officials of the Secretariat of the Organization.

In a total breach of the regulations contained in those resolutions and of the willingness expressed in them by the Members of the Organization, the host country continues to impose and to intensify the travel limitations and restrictions already imposed, in an arbitrary manner and based on political motivations, against the personnel of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations.

From 1996 up to the present date, the authorities of the host country have increased its policy of denying the requests for travel authorization submitted by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations. During this period of time, 19 requests for travel authorization have been denied: being those linked with United Nations events; trips to Cuba through one of the four ports of entry and departure imposed by the North American authorities upon the cuban personnel; for personal invitations sent to Cuban officials; and for official working invitations sent by the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. to Cuban officials.

On 21 April 1997, the United States Mission to the United Nations denied a request for travel authorization submitted by the Permanent Mission of Cuba, so that H. E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, could travel to Washington, D.C., at the personal invitation of the Head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., for internal work.

The United States Mission to the United Nations also denied a request for travel authorization submitted by the Permanent Mission of Cuba on 25 April 1997 so that Mr. Eddy Machado Alvarez, Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Cuba, could participate in a meeting of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to be held in Washington, D.C. from 30 April to 1 May 1997.

This denial was all the more serious in that it coincided with the denial of a request for visa submitted via note verbale No. 376 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United States Mission to the United Nations (see annex II).

The United States Mission also denied a request for travel authorization submitted by the Permanent Mission of Cuba on 22 April 1997, which was for the wives of two Cuban diplomatic officials to travel to Cuba using as port of departure the airport of Miami, Florida.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations considers that the arguments given by the United States Mission in defence of the denials of the travel authorization requests submitted by the Permanent Mission of Cuba, in which, as is the normal procedure of the North American authorities and the United States Mission, no explanation whatsoever was given, are in contradiction with the letter and the spirit of the Host Country Agreement signed by the United Nations and the host country, ignore the regulations of the international legal instruments on diplomatic privileges and immunities to which the Government of the United States is a party, go against the atmosphere of the promotion and respect of diplomatic privileges and immunities which the authorities of the host country should facilitate and promote, and interfere with the normal functioning of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations rejects once again the unjustifiable and arbitrary attitude taken by the authorities of the host country and by the United States Mission regarding the travel authorization requests submitted during recent months by the Cuban diplomatic mission, and in particular towards the requests mentioned explicitly in the present note verbale.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations denounces the lack of observance by the Government of the United States of the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly, sole universal body of the multilateral Organization for which the Government of the United States agreed to become the seat, to promote its objectives and principles and to respect the internationally recognized diplomatic privileges and immunities of the representatives of its Member States.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations request the authorities of the host country to take the necessary and sufficient measures to promote the implementation of the obligations and international arrangements contracted to by its Government and to provide a congruent, serious and credible reply to the reiterated and substantive denunciations submitted by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations, in the framework of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as in the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, on the issue of the travel limitations and restrictions that are still imposed, in an arbitrary and politically motivated manner, on Cuban officials.

ANNEX II

Note verbale (No. 376) dated 4 June 1997 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and wishes to enclose a copy of the letter sent by H. E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, to Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), on 29 April 1997 (see appendix).

Through that letter, the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations informed the Council of GEF of the denunciation of the Government of the Republic of Cuba of the denial of the United States State Department to grant an entry visa to Mr. Humberto Arango, Director of International Collaboration of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba and Alternate Representative of the Caribbean Constituency to the GEF Council, to participate in the meeting of the GEF Council to be held in Washington, D.C. on 30 May 1997.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations reiterates the denunciation of the Government of the Republic of Cuba of these kinds of discriminatory and unacceptable actions by the Government of the United States, aimed at hindering the participation of Cuba in international events, among them those promoted within the framework of GEF.

APPENDIX

Letter dated 29 April 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility

With respect to the meeting of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to be held in Washington, D.C. from tomorrow, 30 April to 1 May, I hereby inform you with deep regret that the designated representative of Cuba as the Alternate Representative of the Caribbean Constituency at the aforementioned meeting will not be able to attend the meeting owing to the fact that the State Department decided to deny him the visa.

At the same time, authorization to travel beyond the restriction of 25 miles, to which the members of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations are subject, was also denied to a diplomat from our Permanent Mission who was designated to attend that meeting as well. In this respect, I wish to call your attention to the fact that similar actions have been taken in the past with the aim of impeding the participation in the Council's meetings of Cuban diplomats accredited to the United Nations.

As you may recall, even before the establishment of the current instrument of the Facility, Cuba was very interested and actively engaged in the GEF negotiations and activities and for the past three years has been acting as the Alternate Representative for the Caribbean Constituency at the GEF Council.

The Government of Cuba strongly deplores these kinds of actions and is of the view that continuous attempts by the Government of the United States to impede or obstruct the participation of Cuba in the meetings of the GEF Council not only undermine the universal character of GEF, but are also a serious obstacle to the functioning and coordination of the Caribbean Constituency in the Council, and consequently might also be seen as an obstruction of the Council's work.

Moreover, this unacceptable and discriminatory treatment contradicts the spirit of collaboration and partnership in the promotion of sustainable development which is at the very centre of GEF operations.

While conveying to you these facts, I request your immediate support for the participation of the Cuban Alternate in the meeting of the Council that will start tomorrow, as well as for the participation of the Cuban diplomat accredited to the United Nations. It is our hope that actions of this kind can be prevented in the future in order to facilitate the functioning of the Council.

(Signed) Bruno RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative